

## **SUPPORT FOR HOUSE BILL20-1422 THE COLORADO FOOD PANTRY ASSISTANCE GRANT PROGRAM (FPAG)**

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To the Members of the House State, Veterans, and Military Affairs Committee:

Thank you for taking the time during the compressed second half of this session to consider this important bill. We've all seen the massive lines of people in their cars seeking food from food banks and food pantries as the pandemic took hold. During the initial crisis, and since, Colorado food banks and food pantries have stepped up and provided exponentially more food assistance to Colorado's citizens. Food pantries are reporting an increase of anywhere from two to six times more clients than they served prior to the pandemic.

Fortunately, the Food Pantry Assistance Grant Program, which existed prior to the pandemic, is in a unique position to assist food pantries in meeting the demand – and meet it by providing fresh, healthy food from Colorado growers for their clients. This program specifically connects Colorado growers with food pantries to ensure the pantries have Colorado-grown vegetables, fruits, meat, and dairy available. To date, 130 farms across Colorado have participated in this program and are now positioned to help food pantries provide for their local communities.

The FPAG program is referred to as a triple win program. Your \$500,000 investment generates three positive returns: 1) families get fresh, healthy food; 2) Colorado's farmers get consistent access to markets, which boosts their business; and 3) dollars stay in and circulate through the local economies.

LiveWell Colorado strongly supports this bill because it directly responds to the health and economic issues caused by the pandemic and we encourage you to vote for its passage. I would be happy to provide additional information if you have any questions.

Thank you –

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